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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father, we wait in reverence before Your throne. Cleanse us from our sins, creating in us clean hearts, while renewing a right spirit within us.

Help our lawmakers today to discern Your voice and do Your will. Give them the ability to know Your guidance from all others', permitting You to lead them to Your desired destination.

Lord, speak to them through Your holy Word, guide them with Your spirit, and sustain them with Your might. May they strive to permit justice and righteousness to flourish in this generation and beyond. Use them to rescue those who suffer because of violence and oppression.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Vermont.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4431

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4431) to eliminate discrimination and promote women's health and economic security by ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are limited by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar, under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

GUN LEGISLATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have another matter to speak of, and before I do, I wish to commend my colleague and neighbor from New England, the distinguished Presiding Officer. As President pro tempore, I am always delighted to see somebody step into that position, but I wish to commend him for his tireless and, at times, what must be frustrating negotiations on a matter that is of extreme importance to our country.

In my prior profession, I went to many murder scenes. It seemed always at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning people died of gunshots, and I can remember each one of them as though it was yesterday.

Since then, what we have seen has been far, far worse. And I commend the Senator and his leadership and those in both parties who have worked with him and have tried to at least take some steps to curtail that in this country.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2022

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on June 20, yesterday, we commemorated World Refugee Day. It is an important reminder that we have to rededicate ourselves to a cornerstone of our Nation's founding: providing refuge to the persecuted and oppressed.

Since the days of the earliest European settlers, America has provided safe harbor to waves of refugees throughout our history. Many Americans today can trace their ancestry back to refugees who fled their homelands seeking freedom and security. Welcoming refugees is not just something America does; it is who we always have been.

Americans have put this long tradition of welcoming refugees on full display in recent months. After the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Americans across the political spectrum opened their hearts, homes, and wallets to Afghans fleeing the Taliban's ruthless rule. To date, American families have helped to welcome nearly 80,000 vulnerable Afghans into the United States, giving them a fresh start. As a Vermonter, I am proud that our small State joined this cause and volunteered to welcome and resettle 100 refugees—100 Afghan refugees.

Now, when Russia shocked the world and invaded Ukraine, Americans of all walks of life yet again stepped up to assist Ukrainians fleeing violence and destruction. Already, tens of thousands of Americans have volunteered to serve as private sponsors for arriving Ukrainian refugees. In fact, a Gallup poll from April confirmed that nearly 80 percent of Americans support resettling 100,000 Ukrainian refugees in the United States. That happens to be a central goal of the Biden administration, the Uniting for Ukraine initiative.

The deep and broad support for refugees among the American people has, for many years, been reflected in the Halls of Congress. I strongly supported

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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the 1980 Refugee Act, the landmark law creating our modern U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and asylum system. That legislation was passed overwhelmingly in the House and here in the Senate unanimously. In the decades since, both parties have worked together to provide refuge to exiled Cubans, displaced Haitians, dissident Chinese, and many other refugee populations feeling persecution and tyranny.

Most recently, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I worked again with Members of both parties to pass multibillion-dollar aid packages to fund our government's efforts to aid Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

So it should come as no surprise that both parties have more often than not worked together to support refugees seeking to begin anew in the United States. The over 3 million refugees who have resettled in the United States over the past several decades have enriched our country economically and culturally. Refugees are entrepreneurs and job creators. They are active and committed. They are members of our communities. They are our neighbors and friends. Our Nation's history has been defined by refugees, from Albert Einstein, to Madeleine Albright. Their stories and the stories of the millions of other refugees who come to our shores are the American way.

Now, the Trump administration gave rise to a dark turn toward nativism and xenophobia, a jarring retreat from what has made America great. The hateful policies of the Trump administration, espoused first by the former President himself, aimed to demonize refugees and asylum seekers, to shut our doors to the persecuted and oppressed. These policies were shameful. They should be repudiated—repudiated forcefully by every Member of the Senate.

Now, there is much more to be done to rebuild our Nation's capacity and welcome and resettle refugees. I will continue fighting to defend and support refugees in my remaining months in the Senate, just as I have throughout my Senate career.

Today, though, I am hopeful. I see Vermonters coming together in aid of native Afghan and Ukrainian refugees over the past several months, and I am confident that America's highest ideals have not seen their last days. We, the American people, have not lost sight of our roots. We are still here, an imperfect but compassionate beacon of hope for the hopeless. We are still here, our torch held high.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a little more than 2 years ago, with Republican policies in place, American workers and families were enjoying one of the best economic moments in a generation.

Unemployment was at a 50-year low. Inflation was very low at the same time. Our economy was growing robustly, and workers were reaping the benefits: Real wages were climbing. In fact, wages at the bottom of the income distribution were growing faster than that at the top. In other words, on our watch, working-class Americans were getting bigger percentage raises than their bosses.

Under these conditions, the American people were looking forward to the future. Satisfaction with the direction of our country was at a 15-year high. Consumer confidence was hovering near its highest level since 2000, and small business optimism had set an all-time record high.

Republican policies helped create that environment, from cutting red-tape to passing the most comprehensive tax cuts and tax reform in a generation.

Now, Democrats said the 2017 tax bill would not strengthen the economy and would starve the Federal Government of money, but we Republicans knew better. And sure enough, with our tax bill in place, Federal revenues are at historic levels. The past fiscal year's nominal corporate tax receipts were the highest they have been since 2007. Individual income tax receipts just hit an all-time record high as well, and they are on pace to climb even higher this year. Overall, Treasury Department revenues just recorded their largest 1-year surge in 44 years.

So that is what has happened since the 2017 tax reform that Democrats literally predicted would be "Armageddon": tax cuts for American families, record-setting tax revenues, and the best economy for working families in a generation prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, most of our Democratic colleagues have a terrible track record when it comes to economic policies and predictions. The tax reform they called Armageddon preceded low inflation, high employment, and robust growth.

And what about on their watch?

Democrats setting policy on party lines decided on trillions of dollars in reckless spending. That has bought us the worst inflation in 40 years, anemic growth, and now, on top of all of that, the threat of rising unemployment and a possible recession.

Just as Senate Democrats were preparing to dump \$2 trillion in reckless spending on our economy, the Senate Democratic leader said:

I do not think the dangers of inflation, at least in the near term, are very real.

President Biden said:

The risk is not doing too much. The risk is not doing enough.

Secretary Yellen said:

[T]he price of doing too little is much higher than the price of doing something big.

Well, they were all wrong, and American families are paying dearly for it.

The Democratic leader claimed:

The dangers of undershooting our response are far greater than overshooting.

And:

We cannot do too little. We cannot lock our country into a long and slow recovery.

Well, if Democrats did not want a long recovery, mission accomplished. A long and steady recovery with stable prices, rising real wages, falling unemployment, and strong growth would have been exactly what the doctor ordered, but the Democrats' policies helped take that option entirely off the table for our country.

Instead, their decisions have fueled skyrocketing prices, a decline in Americans' real incomes, and cornered the Federal Reserve into having to raise rates sharply and potentially stop or reverse the recovery altogether.

So, faced with this mess, what is our all-Democratic government planning next? Are our colleagues admitting their mistakes and trimming back their appetites?

Unfortunately, not—just the opposite.

Even now, with the evidence of a historic, self-inflicted policy disaster piling up all around them, Democrats are reviving talks for yet another party-line taxing-and-spending spree this summer. Even with the economy teetering on the brink of a recession, even with families' real incomes already falling rapidly on their watch, Senate Democrats are reportedly behind closed doors, dreaming up—listen to this—historic new tax hikes to drop on top of our economy at the very worst possible time.

The same Democrats who wanted to pass trillions more in spending last year now want to rush through huge new tax hikes. The same party that spent 2021 trying to inflate their way out of inflation now wants to spend 2022 tax-hiking their way right into a recession. You could not invent—could not invent—a worse time for Washington Democrats to pile on new tax hikes on our country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF TITLE IX

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, this week, we are celebrating the 50th